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ABSTRACT

This summary report on the Study of Induction Programs for Beginning Teachers offers insights on the findings of the study. Two kinds of programs were studied: preservice internship programs, and induction programs. A discussion is given on what the study revealed about the experiences of beginning teachers in the transition period from students to active classroom teachers. Characteristics and sequence of problems faced by beginning teachers are considered. A brief description is given of programs developed specificially for the transition period into teaching. Recommendations are made for more in-depth, more comprehensive developmental studies of the beginning teacher, and the social forces which shape the perceptions and attitudes of beginning teachers. (JD)

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THE TRANSITION INTO TEACHING: THE PROBLEMS OF BEGINNING TEACHERS AND PROGRAMS TO SOLVE THEM

SUMMARY REPORT

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and

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
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Educational Testing Service

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Dr. Carol A. Stevenson served as a collaborator on the project reported here from its inception as an idea which became a proposal. Roni Simon and Mary Lee Fisher were our research assistants. All of them have contributed to writing various parts of the four volumes of the study. This project was supported by the National Institute of Education, under contract # 400-78-0069. Dr. Joseph Vaughn was our project officer; he encouraged the expansion of the project from its original goal of studying teaching internships to a study of the problems of beginning teachers, the internship and induction programs.

Introduction

The most important period in the life of a teacher is that time when the teacher first faces and is fully responsible for teaching a class. This is the moment of beginning to teach. The teacher is now fully responsible for the management of a class, for its organization and the conduct of instruction, and for the evaluation of pupils. The moment of beginning to teach is perilous and fraught with risks. It is a time of entering an unknown territory. It is the beginning of a major life-change. It is not surprising that its onset arouses anxiety and fear.

Very little is known in a strict scientific sense about this period in the life of a teacher, but much has been learned from teachers who have described their feelings about it and the experience of passing through it. Two ideas run through reports about this period in the life of a teacher. It is invariably described as one of great anxiety, even of trauma. Teachers also are largely agreed that they were ill-prepared for it.

It is relatively easy to find out why teachers feel that they were ill-prepared. But it is not equally clear that they were poorly prepared. One of the reasons that it is not possible to state unequivocally whether or not teachers are poorly or reasonably well prepared for beginning to teach is that the effects of teacher preparation programs have not been systematically and comprehensively evaluated. Further, because the programs themselves are largely alike in structure and substance, it is

not possible to ascertain with reasonable certainty or relative precision what in this preparation program was lacking or what was useful. (A basic form of preparing teachers has evolved over decades and while there has been experimentation within this form, the form itself has largely remained unchanged.)

We are left with a conundrum. We do not know whether to improve the quality of teacher preparation or whether some special form of assistance is required during the transition into teaching, or whether radically new forms of teacher preparation should be tried. We are further hampered in our understanding of how best to prepare teachers because the transition period itself and the months and years immediately following it have not been comprehensively, thoroughly, rigorously, or well studied. Most of the literature on the beginning teacher consists of reports from beginning or experienced teachers about their experiences. Data from the observation of beginning teachers is much slimmer. Frequently teachers have been asked to recall their beginning experiences (these reports suggest that the past has been reconstructed somewhat in their memories). Our formal knowledge therefore has been derived through very weak methodological devices. Yet the substance of what has been said is remarkably consistent.

What This Study Was About

The state of our knowledge was generally known before this study began. But this study was undertaken to determine with greater precision what is known about the problems of beginning teachers, and to describe as accurately and completely as possible the means which have been used to anticipate, prevent, resolve or ameliorate these problems.

Even a small sampling of the literature on the beginning teacher reveals its inadequacies. The literature was, however, surveyed, catalogued, read and analyzed. Programs designed to prepare teachers specifically for the transition into teaching were also located and surveyed, and among them a number were selected for visiting and a more comprehensive inquiry about how they prepare or assist beginning teachers.

Two kinds of programs were studied. One kind is a preservice program, the internship. The other, now called an induction program, is a program in which the beginning teacher participates when they are first employed full-time with full teaching responsibility assigned to them.

It was thought that comprehensive surveys of these kinds would give us a better idea of what is known about the problems of beginning teachers, and some understanding of what has been tried and how well it has worked to help beginning teachers cope with these problems. The study was in large part a diversified survey; it was neither an experiment nor a correlational study.

The study provides, therefore, a state-of-the-art review and analysis, out of which are derived some recommendations for more specific kinds of research and experimentation.

What This Study Found

The weaknesses in the literature are many--samples of convenience, weak data-gathering procedures, poor categorical descriptions of problems, the most rudimentary types of quantitative analyses, and a lack of comparisons and contrasts among programs and among places where teachers first begin to teach. One of the most glaring omissions is the absence of studies which relate differences in the characteristics of the beginners to their receptivity to certain forms of training and to the kinds of problems they have. Another glaring deficiency is the failure to relate the characteristics of the setting in which the teacher begins to teach or learns to teach to the kinds of problems they have or do not have.

But despite these deficiencies, there is a remarkable homogeneity in the conclusions which are drawn. Whether a study has a careful design or a poor design, whether the sample is small or large, whether the teachers queried are student, beginners, or experienced teachers, the conclusions are remarkably similar. This feature alone suggests that the problems are obvious, almost universal, and readily accessible to anyone who wants to look at them.

The study found that beginning teachers experience the transition into teaching as a period of great anxiety and fear, even of trauma. (There are, numbers unknown, teachers who do not experience great anxiety and trauma, but the majority find the transition into teaching to be a very difficult time, and one which they are glad to have survived.) Most of them felt ill-prepared for the transition into teaching. They had felt unprepared to manage classes and worried greatly about "controlling"

them. They were frequently unfamiliar with the teaching materials and the subjects which they had to teach so that they felt they were not adequately prepared in the substance of what was to be taught. They report regularly a lack of understanding of and a psychological distance from their pupils.

This study found that the two major types of preservice programs, the traditional four-year program capped by student teaching, and the intensive one-year internship program, prepared teachers equally well or equally poorly for the transition into teaching. Several internship programs have been in existence for about 20 years, and have survived various kinds of attacks on their utility. These illustrate different ways in which a program may be constructed which employs large amounts of practical experience in the classroom as its central feature. We found very few induction programs, and even these served special purposes for the school districts which had developed them. We did, however, have the benefit of the literature on the English experiments in induction and the opportunity to talk with the director of the evaluation of those programs.

Out of this amalgam of information and observation it is possible to draw some conclusions. Carefully supervised and extensive experience, as is well known, has a significant effect on how well a teacher will learn to cope with the problems of transition. But it does not follow automatically, as is also well known, that having experience in and of itself is the critical factor in enabling a teacher to pass through the transition period successfully.

According to the statements of new and experienced teachers and their supervisors, the beginning teacher needs the fundamental skills

of managing a group for instruction. It is generally believed that such skills can be learned and ought to be learned before beginning to teach. Teacher educators believe they are teaching these skills in their training programs. Clearly there is a difference in viewpoints here which does not flow entirely from the projection of one's deficiencies on to one's training nor from defensiveness about the quality of one's training program.

This disagreement has not been resolved for decades. It continues to fester. It may be one of the causes of teachers' antitheoretical approach to teaching and teacher educators' preoccupation with the theoretical and innovative.

Some believe, however, that the experiences of the first year are unique, and simply must be gone through: that the process of learning to cope with these experiences is necessary to becoming a teacher. Training programs, this way of thinking says, may provide the individual with some skills necessary for coping during this period: the beginning teacher may become acquainted with the types of pupils he or she will teach; they may do some planning and organizing of instruction. But even when they have had these experiences, the first weeks and months of teaching will be different than simulated or practice experiences. This essential difference suggests to some that the beginning teacher needs assistance during the transition period.

It is obvious to us who have looked at these various programs and heard and thought about the arguments pro and con, that the issue of training versus on-the-job assistance is a real issue only if assistance cannot be provided or if training will be mostly inadequate. Practically,

what a teacher is most likely to profit from is a program which prepares the teacher with the skills required to begin to teach well and an on-site program which provides the teacher with assistance, support and guidance during the transition into teaching.

Although managing a class during the first days of teaching is essential to survival and to effectiveness, both the development of effectiveness and personal and professional growth are affected by the experiences of the transition period. The deficiencies of the literature on beginning teachers include omissions--problems neither perceived nor studied. One of these omissions is the failure to explore how the transition into teaching affects the development of the teacher; the psycho-social, ego development; what we imply when we use phrases such as, "becoming an adult," and "becoming a professional."[1]

It is apparent, though relatively unstudied, that many of the phenomena of beginning teaching are the developmental phenomena characteristic of a major life-change. Until the moment of beginning to teach the beginning teacher has been a young adult living in a community of young adults under the supervision and tutelage of adults, who has relied on the support and understanding of these adults as well as that of his or her peers. This person now finds himself or herself in an entirely different social setting. They may for the first time be living totally independently of their families and away from their home

[1] A notable, but largely ignored exception to this statement, is the work of Frances Fuller at the University of Texas who studied the transition through the teacher education program as a developmental process. Her work clearly reveals that becoming a teacher requires fundamental changes in perspective and attitude without which skill learning is not mastered.

or college community. They may be establishing their own homes. They may be living alone for the first time. They are strangers in their occupational world, a characteristic of the period which is exacerbated by the relative social isolation of the daily life of a teacher.

To understand the problems of beginning teachers, it is necessary to look at beginning teaching as critical developmental experiences for the individual. Beginning teaching is not simply a period of testing out learned skills in the setting in which they are to be used. Nor is it a period in which one has certain kinds of new experiences. Rather, everything that happens to the beginning teacher is part of a complex of interacting forces in their lives.

Beginning teaching is the first stage in achieving success in a chosen occupation, and is therefore a way of confirming one's sense of identity and choice of an occupation in life. Beginning teaching probably ought to be studied and thought about as one critical stage in the development of this sense of identity, of experiencing trustworthiness in life, of testing one's capacities and abilities, of evaluating one's goals. It ought to be seen as the first full step into adulthood, the completion of the period of childhood and adolescence, and therefore as a time of identity crisis, of potential threat to the ego, and like all such stages in life, as affecting the course of an individual's development towards maturity.

It is also apparent, largely from talking to experienced teachers about their experiences, that the period of beginning teaching has significant effects on the professional development of the teacher. The data here, like all of the data with respect to beginning teachers, is hardly what could be called the most solid form of empirical evidence,

and we have therefore recommended much more careful study of the professional development of the teacher from the period of preservice through the transition into teaching and into the first few years of teaching. Such careful study will fill out the picture of what occurs in the course of professional development, when and how it is arrested, when and how a base is laid that stimulates this development. There is sufficient evidence from what teachers say about their experience at that time and about the way they teach after it to believe that how the teacher solves the basic problems of learning to teach, the problems of managing a class and organizing of instruction, is highly likely to determine how that teacher will teach in future years. We suspect that many of the difficulties in getting teachers to adopt new practices and new methods of teaching are rooted in the experiences of the transition period.

The transition into teaching is therefore significant in the life of the teacher in two ways. First, it is a major life stage, a stage in which the individual moves into the adult world and the occupational world. But the nature of this occupation is such that the person's sense of identity may very well be threatened, their development of a sense of trust and their capacities for affiliation may be significantly affected. Further, this period is the first stage in laying a base for future professional development, which may be completely arrested at this time or a sense of confidence and efficacy may be acquired so that the teacher will continue to expand professionally. These considerations have not been adequately attended to nor have these aspects of the transition into teaching been studied sufficiently.

The issues of when and where and how to prepare tends to be confounded

by creating arbitrary divisions in preservice periods and by allotting the responsiblity for training at these different times to two different institutions, the collegiate institution and the local school system. Nowhere is the split between the structure of preservice training and subsequent inservice training more apparent than at the period of the transition into teaching. The beginning teacher moves from the world of preservice teaching into a world in which he or she may have no or very little assistance during the critical period of the first months of teaching.

It would be less than honest to claim that the needs of beginning teachers have been met for acquiring and learning to use the basic skills of teaching. Behind the charges and counter-charges is an important finding--some critical skills are not being learned, or how to use them regularly and consistently has not been learned.

But the disputations surrounding this problem obscure a more important problem. What is the nature of the change, the psychological and social change, from student to teacher; from one who is guided and directed and stimulated to one who guides, directs and stimulates; from an absorber, perhaps critic, of the culture to the transmitter of it; from the dependent post-adolescent to the independent, responsible young adult?

We believe, therefore, that the profession as a whole needs to consider first how to create a functional institutional continuum, from the period of preservice training through the period of induction or transition into teaching. The dichotomy, probably false, between the theoretical which is allotted to the preservice and the practical which is

allotted to the inservice is probably a false dichotomy which confuses and confounds decisions about who will be responsible and in what ways for assisting the beginning teacher to become an effective professional.

It is also clear that simply providing more experience, as the internships do, does not automatically change the character of the initial experience, but does change the rate at which adaptation to these initial experiences is achieved and the relative trauma of them is reduced. The internships built on the preservice program, however, remedies these difficulties by providing a progressive induction into the experiences of teaching and successive opportunities for evaluating the trainee's development.

Induction programs may be confining and stultifying by their over-emphasizing the parochial aspects of teaching. But these programs clearly have merit; they provide the support that a beginning teacher needs. They are, however, woefully weak in terms of the quality of instructional assistance which is provided, largely because the mentor teachers are unprepared for training teachers.

This study found:

1. That despite inadequacies in methodology most studies of beginning teaching found teachers in transition to experience great anxiety because of feelings of inadequacy and because they do not know what to do to master such fundamental teaching tasks as managing, planning, and organizing.

2. That the transition period appears to be a series of tasks and problems to master, most of which occur within the first six months of teaching. These challenges occur successively because a beginner solves

one task and then can take on another or because the tasks are linked to the calendar.

3. That the effects of passing through this period of professional development have not been truly studied, but that teachers' descriptions of their early experiences strongly suggest their lasting influence on how the teacher perceives teaching and what she or he will be willing to do that requires changes in teaching style.

4. That this stage is too frequently seen as one of acquiring or having acquired very practical and concrete skills of teaching rather than as a major life-stage the transition through which has significant effects on the teacher's sense of ego identity, trust, affiliation and efficacy.

5. That of the major programmatic strategies for assisting teachers during this period, only one, induction programs are designed specifically for this purpose. They are promising, but have not been sufficiently developed to be completely effective. Training for mentor teachers is necessary if these programs are to be fully effective.

6. Internships except when they are built on preservice programs, do not eliminate the difficulties of the transition period. The internship as an extended period of professional growth does not exist in this country except in a few programs.

7. Each of the major forms of preparing or assisting beginning teachers has one or more serious deficiencies. Also there is great discontinuity between the period of preparation and the transition period which has existed for decades. Neither internships in their present form nor induction programs remove this discontinuity.

These findings point to a major institutional and political problem. Until this problem is resolved, it is unlikely that beginning teachers will be better prepared, in skill or emotional resources, for the transition into teaching.

The Problems of Beginning Teachers

There are two notable features about the problems of beginning teachers: first, their relatively invariant characteristics, and second, their sequence. The first experience of the beginning teacher is largely, as we have said, traumatic. The beginning teacher is afraid of those first classes and those first days of teaching. They do not know whether they will succeed and they fear failure. Although such experience might be expected in any job or the beginning of a new line of work, teaching is particularly traumatic because of its interactive nature.

Teachers are not handling inanimate objects which they have to learn to manipulate; they are interacting with very lively and active human beings who may engage the teachers in a struggle for control over the activities of the classroom. The fear of "losing control" is the predominant emotion of the beginning teacher in the early phases, and this fear is reduced only as the beginning teacher manages to control the class. Therefore almost all beginning teachers report difficulties in managing classes, difficulties in controlling classes, as the major problem of beginning to teach.

Such labels are code words for a whole host of specific difficulties and point to kinds of skills which beginning teachers usually lack and to needs they have for assistance. Beginning teachers apparently are unable

to deal with educational problems of any other kind until they feel they can teach a class without interruption, with reasonable attention from their students, and without receiving disrespectful or even insulting behavior from pupils. They have to learn to be "in charge", and until they feel they are in charge, they suffer intense anxiety.

The second major problem of the beginning teacher is the problem of filling time. Almost all beginning teachers are afraid of running out of material. If they run out of material, they stop teaching, and when they stop teaching, they may lose control of the class. In the jargon of teacher education, they need to learn how to "pace" a lesson, but the problem seems to be more than merely pacing. It seems to be a problem of having sufficient material so that they can conduct a lesson for the full time of a clock hour.

The third problem of beginning teachers is understanding their students. Many of them report they misjudged their students by having too high expectations. Therefore they report considerable disappointment with the interest and work habits of their students. Or they do not understand the cultural and social habits of their students because of differences in race, ethnic background, or social class. The consequences of this lack of knowledge or understanding are that beginning teachers do not adapt the intruction to differences among pupils, may make errors in the way they talk to pupils, are always uneasy about what they see and hear about their pupils. Until the teacher begins to feel that he or she "knows" his or her students, the teacher will be uncomfortable and will be afraid of making mistakes which will lead to a loss of control of the class.

The period in which these experiences are paramount in the thinking and feeling of the new teacher begins on the first day of school or in the few days prior to it and persists until the teacher feels that he or she can manage the class. If the teacher cannot manage the class, these fears are exacerbated by what happens in the class, and eventually the teacher may lose complete control with the destructive consequences which follow such losses. Or the teacher may persist in the inadequate control manifested in noisy, off-task behavior, and a shouting teacher. The discomfort associated with these deficiencies and inadequacies may persist over a professional lifetime because a teacher never learns to manage a class adequately.

The next two phases of learning how to teach occur when the teacher has to evaluate pupils and when the teacher himself or herself is evaluated by the administration of the school. These periods have different emotional tones to them. The problem of evaluating students is a test of the teacher's ability to maintain professional distance from students, to be objective about students, and to evaluate themselves as teachers in terms of the extent to which they are achieving their goals. Even allowing for inadequate assessment procedures, the results of the first evaluations of what pupils have learned are frequently disappointing. It is at this time that the teacher looks at what he or she is trying to achieve, may resort to blaming pupils, and may unnecessarily lower his or her expectations for what pupils can achieve.

The experience of being evaluated by the administration is tied closely to receiving an invitation to return to the school and within a few years to being offered a tenured position. Therefore the beginning

teacher is usually extremely anxious about the results of the first evaluation. This aspect of the problems of beginning teachers has never really been studied, and tends to be overlooked in many analyses of their problems. Only by careful probing of experienced teachers do we discover how critical this first experience of evaluation by the administrators is in the development of the teacher.

The teacher moves through these stages of problems during the first six months of teaching. It is a rule of thumb that if the teacher has not mastered, at least in a primitive form, these problems within the first six months, the teacher is in serious trouble. It is also a truism among experienced teacher educators that the teacher's basic style and mode of operation is likely to have stabilized and congealed within the first six months.

There are other problems of beginning teachers to which we have pointed which have not been catalogued as comprehensively. These are the problems of personal and social development both in the school and in the community, in their personal life and in their professional life. Beginning teachers are so absorbed in the problems of learning how to teach that they appear to be much less sensitive to or concerned about the problems of adjusting to the faculty with whom they are teaching. The consequence, unfortunately, in most cases is that the beginning teacher is relatively isolated, and because of the fear of not receiving a good evaluation or of being thought of as not adequate, will not seek the assistance of his or her peers. On the one hand the beginning teacher wants to be thought of as having the full status of a teacher, and therefore is unwilling to reveal inadequacies or lack of experience,

but on the other hand needs the support of colleagues who can advise. These social and psychological dilemmas of the beginning teacher have never been adequately explored either in terms of the effects they have on the development of the teacher as a person or on how the beginning teacher acquires a professional style.

Programs for the Transition into Teaching

The internship became popular some 20 years ago, in part through special funding from foundations, and in part because of the emphasis given to the need for more practical experience in teaching. The name "internship" leads many people to assume that the internship in teaching is like the internship in medicine, and in practice is frequently referred to in such terms. In reality the internships, with one notable exception, which have been developed and which continue to exist in this country, are preservice programs which are not built on a prior period of preparation. They, in fact, are just the opposite of the medical internship which is built on years of supervised practicum experiences. The teaching intern therefore frequently suffers all the traumatic experiences of the beginning teacher, somewhat alleviated if there is adequate contemporaneous supervision and emotional support.

We surveyed in depth internships at Stanford and Temple University, and at the University of Oregon. The University of Oregon is the most different of these three programs because the internship is built on an undergraduate preservice program. In many respects this seems to be an ideal form of teacher preparation program. In this type of design the internship serves largely as a supportive form of induction into teaching

and as a continuation and extension of professional development.

The Temple program begins with an intensive summer program, conducted under careful supervision. This arrangement ameliorates some of the undesirable effects of the first months of the internship. Stanford has a less intense summer experience, one built on simulation experiences. Both kinds of arrangements seem to be useful but the Temple program combines simulated and actual teaching experience.

It is apparent from the study of these programs that an ideal program would be one in which there were progressively intensive and extensive practicum experiences capped with student teaching which then lead to a carefully supervised, full-time teaching internship. This structure is well within the capacities of the profession to mount, and what is surprising is that despite all of the recommendations for it in the literature, it has so rarely existed in this country.

Induction programs really do not exist in this country. We were able to locate only a few, two of which were of such recent origin that they were barely functioning. We studied in some detail the Jefferson County, Colorado induction program. It represents one type of induction program. This district has a highly prescribed curriculum and the purpose of the beginning teacher program is to induct the beginning teacher into this curriculum. In such school systems an induction program of this kind is an absolute necessity. But such programs, and this was true in Jefferson County also, spend little time on the generic problems of the beginning teacher, the problems of management and control. The highly structured curriculum does solve some of the beginning teacher's problems of organizing instruction, but creates other problems because the beginning teacher has difficulties, especially if they have

management problems, in teaching this curriculum.

What we observed were a number of programs, whether they were internships or induction programs, each of which had what were obviously desirable features but none of which was complete enough to help beginners master the transition. The best form of program obviously would be the progressive induction into practical experience during the preservice program followed by an internship followed by an induction program which assisted the beginning teacher to adjust to the problems of teaching in a local school system.

Each of the existing types of programs lacked one or more of these significant features. The preservice internship is caught in the dilemma of providing general training to a group and helping each individual adapt to different teaching conditions. In contrast the induction programs are more likely to ignore or not give sufficient attention to the experiences of managing and organizing classes which are generic to teaching. The British experiments, in which mentors are provided for the beginning teacher, have worked well in providing the beginning teacher with what he or she needs to know to work in a particular school. The mentor also provides considerable phychological support. But the mentors at the time of the evaluation of the British programs did very little observing in classrooms and did not help or helped the beginning teachers incidentally with the acquisition of the basic skills of managing and organizing instruction. Both the mentors and the beginning teachers report this fact.

It it obvious therefore that an induction program if it is built on a preservice program serves unique but local functions, functions which are necessary if the beginning teacher is to learn what the community is

like, what the faculty of the school is like, what the curriculum is like, and what the students are like. If the beginning teacher is to learn the local mores and customs he needs a good cultural guide and the mentor serves as such a cultural guide. But it is debatable whether such an arrangement is very useful for solving the problems of acquiring the skills of managing classes and organizing instruction. For this acquisition more systematic, more comprehensive, and more through training is needed and the internship built on a preservice program seems to be an appropriate model.

It is very apparent to the outside observer that these difficulties in beginning teaching need a structural solution and the structural solution probably ought to be along the lines that we have suggested above--continuous progressive programs with different kinds of functions being performed at different stages. Advocacy of an internship without transition or induction programs neglects the need for adaption to the local school. If transition programs are now touted as the solution to the problems of beginning teachers, we will repeat the mistakes of the past in which one particular form adequate for one purpose is treated as if it were the solution of all problems. But teacher-mentors trained as specialists who can diagnose a teacher's problems and can provide in-class instruction and assistance can provide special help. This arrangement has yet to be tried except in a few teacher centers.

Recommended Studies of the Beginning Teacher

Part of the difficulty in organizing to solve the problems of beginning teachers arises from our underestimation of the extent and seriousness

of the problems of this transition period and from our consequent ignorance about them. Most of the studies of beginning teachers are incidental to studying other problems or are studies of convenience. A director of a teacher education program follows up his or her graduates and asks them what their problems were. Or a graduate student who has been working as a supervisor in a teacher education program inquires of his or her students what their problems may be as they begin to teach. Or a college may decide to follow some of its graduates. Occasionally a teachers' organization will conduct a survey. In such ways are the data for beginning teachers put together.

With the exception of some work done in preceding decades by Frances Fuller at the University of Texas, the developmental study of the teacher has been seriously neglected. We know very little about the cognitive and affective processes which characterize the transition into teaching, nor do we know the kinds of changes that occur in these processes as teachers experience the crises of initial teaching.

We have therefore recommended more in-depth, more comprehensive developmental study of the beginning teacher. We do not believe (though it may be useful through more comprehensive surveys to check the point) that what appear to be the problems of beginning teachers will not be these problems on more rigorous inspection. We think what is being said over and over again through the vehicle of rather inadequate research methodology or through the collection of the experiences of teachers, are by and large valid descriptions. Teachers are experiencing great trauma and a sense of inadequacy and feel unprepared when they begin to teach.

But we know very little about who feels unprepared or to what

degree: we know little about the differences among teachers in terms of their personality characteristics as these affect their perceptions of their problems, and we know practically nothing about how differences in the social systems in schools in which teachers begin to teach influence the kinds of problems they have. Such basic knowledge can be developed in a relatively short period of time by comprehensive study of teachers over a two, three, or four-year period. Such knowledge is necessary if we are to understand the casual factors underlying the ways in which teachers react to the experiences they are having.

But we also need systematic study, preferably on a small scale, of variations in forms of training and assistance. It makes little sense, on the basis of what we have seen, to compare two different kinds of internship programs, or an internship program to an induction program. Rather what seems to be needed are programs made up of different experiences ordered in different ways. If induction programs are to be used, we need to know much more about the kinds of work that a mentor can and will do with a beginning teacher in order to help that teacher. We need to know what kinds of people will be successful in the role of mentor, what kinds of training they need, and what kinds of support they themselves will need. About the internship we need to know what kinds of supervision are most likely to make it effective. Sharper distinctions need to be drawn between what can be acquired through simulated experience and what must be integrated and tried out in the actual teaching situation itself. Finally we need to know what kinds of personality characteristics of beginning teachers influence their adaptability to these different training experiences, and which personality characteris-

tics affect how much help and support and training they need.

There is therefore a cluster of about three or four different kinds of major problems which need comprehensive and thorough empirical investigation. There is first the problem of the developmental stages through which the teacher is passing as a person. There is the problem of how professional development occurs, how skill is acquired and enlarged in the maelstrom of practice, how interest is developed in enhancing one's skill and competence. What are the bases for a sense of efficacy? How does one learn to "understand" pupils? What are the significant skills required to manage a class successfully on the first day of teaching? What kinds of planning ought a beginning teacher to have done before they begin to teach? These questions and the cluster of problems of which they are a part need to be studied in the context of beginning to teach. Too many studies look only at the beginning teacher during his or her preservice program or several years later. Methodology must follow the beginning teacher from early preservice experiences to later stages of professional development.

Conclusion

This study has suggested that one focal point for research on teaching probably ought to be developmental research on the beginning teacher. Such problems as how skill is acquired are not likely to be resolved in any comprehensive way without developing an understanding of how certain kinds of life experiences affect how one perceives what skill is needed, what perception and understanding one has of the nature of skill, the nature of the relation of skill to efficiency, effectiveness, and a sense

of efficacy. We need to understand how the resolution of fear and anxiety provides a sense of trust of oneself. We need to understand the cognitive bases of a sense of competence.

Focusing attention on a study of these aspects of learning to become a teacher will inevitably draw our attention to the social forces which shape the perceptions and the attitudes of a beginning teacher. Beginning teachers live in an intense social milieu from the time they enter the teaching program throughout their professional careers. It is a social milieu in which they have varying degrees of support and psychic sustenance and we ought to know how these variations enhance their sense of self-esteem and competence, how these milieus set standards and norms for performance and for development.

The study of the beginning teacher leads into all aspects of understanding how to teach and what it means to become a person who is a teacher and a teacher who is a person. Perhaps it has been the segmented approach in research on teaching in which we looked at selected aspects of preservice teaching, or at effectiveness as measured by limited kinds of pupil outcomes, which has kept us from finding the understanding which would make this knowledge useful in the preparation of teachers. Perhaps studies on effective teaching would be enhanced if we knew how that effectiveness had been developed from the time that the person became a preservice teacher through the early transition period.

As is apparent to those who study teachers, some teachers may be born, but most are not. Most people learn to teach. There is a period in which one learns to become an effective teacher. This is the most important period in the life of a teacher because it determines what will

happen to him or her for many years to come. The transition into teaching is therefore worthy of special study because of its social significance, because of its practical consequences, and because it touches so many aspects of the professional life of teaching and schooling.